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Akin Urges the Lifting of Restrictions on Small Planes

Congressman sends letter to Dr. Condoleeza Rice expressing hardship on small to mid-size aviation business

Washington, D.C.- On October 2nd, Congressman Todd Akin sent a letter to the president's National Security Advisor, Condoleeza Rice, asking the National Security Council (NSC) to lift its ban on all light weight Visual Flight Rules (VFR) flights in Class B airspace.

The order affects planes under 6,000 pounds within a 20-30 mile radius of a major U.S. airport. Almost all of the general service airports in the St. Louis region are within the 20-30 mile radius of Lambert-St. Louis International Airport. According to the Director of the Spirit of St. Louis Airport, approximately 85% of the planes at that airport are grounded.

Mid-sized aviation-based business is experiencing tremendous economic losses due to the ban. This includes flight instruction, aerial photography, helicopter lifts, and emergency medical services.

"The people who work in the general aviation industry in my area tell me that if this ban continues indefinitely most of these businesses will either go bankrupt or lay off the bulk of their workforces," said Akin.

The letter requests that the NSC lift the ban, or provide a compelling reason for continuing it and a date that it will be lifted.

"As a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I both understand and laud the attention to national security," stated Akin. "Yet, as a member of the Small Business Committee, I also understand the concern of these aviation-dependent businesses."